

Members of the Appropriations Committee,

As a student enrolled at a public institution in Connecticut I am in a distinct predicament. I am the future of this state. I am the future of our economy. As I'm sure you know the vast majority of students who attend Central, Eastern, Southern, and Western remain in this state and become members of our workforce. I want to be provided with the best education and best resources possible so that I may develop myself and my skills in the precious four year educational opportunity that I have embarked upon. I have the utmost respect for the institution I attend and I have great hope for the impact that I can make on our state in the future, but right now I fear that opportunity may be jeopardized. The universities have been instructed not to raise tuition by more than 2% for the next fiscal year. This leaves my university, as well as the three other state universities and twelve community colleges running deficits; the only way for them to make up these deficits is to cut resources. That means I get less and less resources. I get fewer professors, I get fewer course options, I get bigger classrooms, I get an increased chance of not graduating on time, I get less tutoring, and I get less hours in the library. This isn't about me; however, this isn't about what I get. This is about what Connecticut gets; and what Connecticut gets is a less productive worker. Not just one worker, however, they get 5,500 less productive workers just from my university, the smallest of the four. Connecticut will be devastated by the financial strangle being placed on the state universities and community colleges. I urge you today to consider legislation that provides greater funding to the state university system. As we stand today we are all losing. I, as a student, am losing the great opportunity that I have before me. You, as a legislator, are sacrificing the quality of the great state you govern for. We, as citizens of Connecticut, are losing our future. I love my school, I love my state, and I want to be able to love these two places in twenty years, but as it stands today I fear that the future may not be as bright as I would like to think it is now. I urge you as a leader to protect the future of our higher educational system, of our economy, and of our state; please consider legislation that will give greater funds to our universities and community colleges.

Thank you,

Matthew Hicks

Student, Eastern Connecticut State University